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WelcomeBC

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2008AG0033-001009
June 30, 2008

Ministry of Attorney General
and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism

12 NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES WELCOME B.C. NEWCOMERS

VICTORIA – Funding of $2.3 million over three years will be provided to the Association of Neighbourhood Houses for the Building Welcoming and Inclusive Neighbourhoods pilot project, Attorney General and Minister responsible for Multiculturalism Wally Oppal announced today.

"Neighbourhood houses encourage residents from diverse backgrounds and cultures to interact by giving them a place to meet and participate in social programs and services and helping newcomers integrate into neighbourhood life," said Oppal. "By implementing this pilot project with neighbourhood houses, we are funding tools and strategies that encourage inclusion and build on B.C.'s cultural diversity."

The three-year pilot project will involve a consortium of 12 neighbourhood houses, serving different communities in the Lower Mainland, in identifying best practices for creating welcoming neighbourhoods. The neighbourhood houses will assist and support individuals and families to develop community networks, increase personal and educational skills and obtain information to improve their health and well-being.

"We're delighted to be a part of this project," said Association of Neighbourhood Houses executive director Mamie Hutt-Temoana. "The greatest benefit of the project is it will provide a basis for building fair, sustainable and prosperous communities. It will help ensure neighbourhoods are places where social inclusion is a fundamental guiding principle, diversity is appreciated and grassroots leadership is strengthened because participation is the key to community life."

Neighbourhood houses provide programs, activities and services such as prenatal health classes, community kitchens, youth programs, food banks, law clinics, English as an additional language classes and seniors' activities. Neighbourhood houses offer environments where people of all nationalities, ages and abilities feel welcome and that are unique to the communities they serve.

The pilot project will explore neighbourhood houses' leadership role in encouraging communities to be inclusive of residents from diverse cultural backgrounds. They will address racism in creative ways by building on existing community services. The pilot will help communities to learn more about what it takes for neighbourhoods to be inclusive and welcoming to newcomers and people from various cultural experiences.

"Immigration is a major factor in the growth of many B.C. communities," said Dave S. Hayer, parliamentary secretary for multiculturalism. "This pilot project will help break down the barriers many immigrants experience, so they can participate fully as neighbours in our communities and as citizens of British Columbia."

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The Building Welcoming and Inclusive Neighbourhoods pilot is supported under WelcomeBC, a provincial initiative that unites B.C.'s comprehensive settlement and integration services and programs under one umbrella. WelcomeBC also helps communities to strengthen community capacity throughout B.C. and supports welcoming and inclusive communities.

Funding for this initiative is provided in large part by the Government of Canada through the agreement for Canada-British Columbia Co-operation on immigration.

For information about WelcomeBC, go to: www.WelcomeBC.ca.

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1 backgrounder(s) attached.

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BACKGROUNDER

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NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSES PARTICIPATING IN PILOT PROJECT

Consortium of neighbourhood houses participating in welcoming and inclusive neighbourhood pilot project:

Association of Neighbourhood Houses		
Address	**Executive Director**	**Contact**
Central Office 203-3102 Main St. Vancouver	Mamie Hutt-Temoana	604 875-9111
Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House 4065 Victoria Drive Vancouver	Donna Chang	604 874-4231
Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House 2131 Renfrew St. Vancouver	Gary Dobbin	604 251-1225
Gordon House 1019 Broughton St. Vancouver	John Lucas	604 683-2554
Kitsilano Neighbourhood House 2325 West 7th Ave. Vancouver	Catherine Leach	604 736-3588
Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House 800 East Broadway Vancouver	Jocelyne Hamel	604 879-8208
South Vancouver Neighbourhood House 6470 Victoria Drive Vancouver	Karen Larcombe	604 324-6212

Independent Neighbourhood Houses		
Kiwassa Neighbourhood House 2425 Oxford St. Vancouver	Nancy McRitchie	604 254-5401
Collingwood Neighbourhood House 5288 Joyce St. Vancouver	Paula Carr	604 435-0323
Little Mountain Neighbourhood House 3981 Main St. Vancouver	Joel Bronstein	604 879-7104
North Shore Neighbourhood House 225 East 22nd St. North Vancouver	Don Rutherford	604 987-8138
South Burnaby Neighbourhood House 4845 Imperial St. Burnaby	Antonia Beck	604 431-0400
Oak Avenue Neighbourhood Hub Society 12740-102 Ave. Surrey	Dave Stark	604 582-7088

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